

Amendments to the Claims

This "Listing of Claims" replaces all prior versions of claims in the subject application:

¹ ~~32~~. (Currently Amended) A process for the recovery of an organic acid ester from a fermentation broth comprising:

(a) conducting a fermentation to produce a fermentation broth, wherein the fermentation broth comprises an organic acid and microbial biomass;

(ab) drying said fermentation broth to obtain a an organic acid-containing dried product, wherein said drying occurs without prior removal of insolubles said microbial biomass from said organic acid-containing fermentation broth;

(bc) adding said organic acid-containing dried product of step (ab) to a lower alcohol in the presence of an acid to obtain a free organic acid,

(ed) esterifying the free organic acid to the corresponding ester; and

(de) removing insolubles to obtain a solution comprising an organic acid ester, wherein the insolubles include the microbial biomass.

33-35. (Cancelled)

² ~~32~~. (Currently Amended) The process of claim ¹~~32~~, wherein at in step (bc) the concentration of said organic acid added to said lower alcohol is from about 50 g/L to about 100 g/L.

³ ~~37~~. (Currently Amended) The process of claim ¹~~32~~, wherein in step (ab) drying comprises spray drying said fermentation broth.

⁴ ~~38~~. (Currently Amended) The process of claim ¹~~32~~, wherein the reaction temperature at in steps (bc) and (ed) is from about 25° C to about 60° C.

⁵
~~39~~. (Currently Amended) The process of claim ~~32~~¹, wherein ~~at~~in step (~~b~~c) said lower alcohol is selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, propanol, butanol and glycol.

⁶
~~40~~. (Currently Amended) The process of claim ~~32~~¹, wherein ~~at~~in step (~~b~~c) about 1.2 equivalents of acid is added.

⁷
~~41~~. (Currently Amended) The process of claim ~~32~~¹, wherein ~~at~~in step (~~b~~c) said acid is selected from the group consisting of sulphuric acid, hydrobromic acid, hydrochloric acid and phosphoric acid.

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~~42~~. (Currently Amended) The process of claim ~~41~~⁷, wherein ~~at~~in step (~~b~~c) said acid is sulphuric acid.

⁹
~~43~~. (Currently Amended) The process of claim ~~32~~¹, wherein ~~at~~in step (~~d~~e) the process for removing insolubles comprises filtration.

¹⁰
~~44~~. (Original) The process of claim ~~32~~¹, wherein said organic acid comprises lactic acid, 2-keto-L-gulonic acid, citric acid or gluconic acid.

¹¹
~~45~~. (Original) The process of claim ~~44~~¹⁰, wherein said organic acid is 2-keto-L-gulonic acid.